

App. No. 10/810,120
Amendment Dated: November 28, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 3 and 5 - 22 are pending in this application. Claims 1 – 3, 5-14, 21 and 22 are allowed. Claims 15, 16 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Claim 17 is objected to, but contains allowable subject matter. Claims 15 - 17 are amended. No new matter has been added. In view of the amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The office action indicated that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for identifying allowable subject matter.

Claim 17 has been amended to depend from independent claim 15. Claim 15 is amended to include limitations that are substantially similar to the limitations from claims 16 and 17 prior to the present amendment. It is believed that claim 15 should now be allowable. Claims 16 – 20 depend upon and further limit independent claim 15, and should be allowable for at least that reason as well as any additional limitations they recite. It is believed that claims 15 - 20 are now in proper form for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 15 - 16 and 18 - 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,456,051 to Darzy. According to the office action, "Figure 4 of Darzy shows a[sic] apparatus comprising a first voltage drop means (26), a pass mean (2), a sense means (Rs) and a comparator means (28) as called for in claim 15."

Claim 15 as amended recites at least the following limitations that are not taught by any of the cited references:

"a first voltage drop means that is coupled to a common node and arranged to provide a trip-point level at a tap-point, wherein the first voltage drop means comprises:

a resistor means that comprises at least a first resistance means and a second resistance means that are coupled together at the tap point; and

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a current source means that is arranged to couple a sense current to the resistor means such that the trip point level is provided at the tap point in response to the sense current".

The office action states that FIGURE 4 of the Darzy reference shows "a first voltage drop means (26), a pass means (2), a sense means (Rs) and a comparator means (28) as called for in [applicant's] claim 15." It is noted that resistor R1 (i.e., resistor 26) from Darzy's Figure 4 is directly connected between the filter circuit and point VmD, where point VMD is directly connected to a diode from element 8. Applicant's amended claim 15 specifically calls for a tap point that in the voltage drop means that is structurally located between the first and second resistance means. Since the voltage drop means (26) from Darzy's FIGURE 4 does not have a tap-point as described in Applicant's amended claim 15, resistor R1 (i.e. resistor 26) from FIGURE 4 does not meet the limitations described in Applicant's claim 6.

Claim 16 has been amended for proper antecedent basis from amended claim 15. Claim 16 further recites that "the current source means is arranged to provide an approximately constant current." FIGURE 4 of Darzy does not describe a current source means that provides an approximately constant current as is found in Applicant's claim 16, and should be allowable for at least that reason, as well as the reasons stated with regards to claim 15.

Claim 17 has been amended to properly depend from claim 15. Claim 17 recites at least the following limitations, in the presently described configuration, that are not taught by the cited references: "a selector means, wherein the resistor means comprises a series of resistors with a series of common points, and wherein the selector means is arranged to select one of the common points as the tap-point." FIGURE 4 of Darzy does not describe a selector means as described in Applicant's claim 17. Applicant's claim 17 is believed to be allowable for at least that reason, as well as the reasons stated with regards to claim 15.

Claims 18 – 20 depend upon and further limit claim 15, and should be allowable for that reason as well as any other limitations they recite.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicant's claim 15 - 20 are believed to be in proper form for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, all pending claims are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons stated above and the application is in condition for allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any further issues regarding this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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